

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 RSC-01

USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 /039 W

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P 110715Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9537

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

UNCLAS JIDDA 7271

E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, SA

SUBJ: VISIT OF TIME CORRESPONDENT

1. IN SUPPORT OF APPROACH ALREADY MADE BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNSELOR RUGGIERO TO MINISTRY OF INFORMATION ON BEHALF OF VISA FOR KARSTEN PRAGER, AMBASSADOR ON DECEMBER 9 REQUESTED MEETING WITH ACTING MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MOHAMMAD MAS'UD. AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD MAS'UD WAS IN RIYADH AND WOULD NOT RETURN UNTIL NIGHT OF DECEMBER 10 OR SOME TIME ON THE 11TH. MFA WILL CALL US AS SOON AS A MEETING CAN BE ESTABLISHED.

2. ON MORNING OF DECEMBER 10, HOWEVER, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PRESS AFFAIRS IN MINISTRY OF INFORMATION INFORMED USIS THAT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAS DECIDED TIME BEIRUT BUREAU CHIEF KARSTEN PRAGER SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE ISSUED A VISA UNTIL AFTER THE HAJ (NOT EARLIER THAN DECEMBER 30). MINISTRY OF INFORMATION SAID IT HAS CABLED SAUDI EMBASSY BEIRUT NOT RPT NOT TO ISSUE PRAGER VISA UNTIL THEN. (DIRECTOR GENERAL SAYS ROYAL DIWAN HAS TOLD MINISTRY OF INFORMATION NOT RPT NOT TO ISSUE VISAS TO ANY JOURNALISTS UNTIL AFTER HAJ, AND THAT THIS NOTIFICATION IS BEING RELAYED TO ALL SAUDI EMBASSIES.)

3. AMBASSADOR STILL PLANS TO SPEAK TO MAS'UD ON BEHALF OF PRAGER (AND ALSO OTHER TIME REPS STEWART, SWEENEY, AND KAPNER) BUT NOW THAT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAS MADE A DECISION, WE
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ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC IT CAN BE REVERSED. WITH AN EXPECTED RECORD

MILLION AND ONE HALF HAJIS (AND SCORES OF ISLAMIC VIP'S)
POURING THROUGH JIDDA ON THEIR WAY TO MECCA THIS YEAR, THE
PRESSURES ON THE COURT ARE SO GREAT AS ALMOST TO PRECLUDE ITS
CONSIDERING ANY OTHER FACTORS.
AKINS

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